

Box 30  
Fldr 63  
Doc. 1

HSCA Interview w/ Joseph Piccolo, 11 August 1978

On August 11, 1978 at 2:00 p.m. Dan Hardway and Charles Berk of the HSCA conducted a two hour interview with Joseph Piccolo, Jr. Mr. Piccolo, <sup>age 43,</sup> is presently an employee of the CIA working as an operations officer in the DDO. He joined the CIA in February 1957, and, except for one year of duty with the Air Force ~~in 1958~~ has continued in his employment with the CIA.

Prior to the beginning of the interview Mr. Piccolo was asked to examine the CIA's omnibus release letter of March 23, 1978. After his examination, Mr. Piccolo indicated that he fully understood the letter's meaning. Mr. Berk then explained to Mr. Piccolo the mandate and purpose of the HSCA.

Mr. Piccolo stated that at the time of JFK's assassination he was a support assistance analyst in the DDO. The responsibilities included maintenance of records, running of trace, and

①

10444-10247

(2)

Spanish language analysis for purpose of operational support.

Subsequent to this position Mr. Piccolo undertook training during the Spring of 1964 to become an operations officer.

Mr. Piccolo further stated that his professional areas of interest were mainly ~~concerned~~ ~~with~~ Latin American. He also

indicated that he served at [the] [CIA's] Mexico City Station from December 1957 - January 1960 and from August 1965 to January 1968.

It was further ascertained that Mr. Piccolo was involved in some Agency operations directed against Cuba during the time periods 1962 - January 1968 ~~1968~~, January 1969 - Jan 1970 and for a 3 month period during 1975.

Mr. Piccolo was asked he was familiar with the cryptonym AMMUS/1. <sup>CA/1</sup> He responded affirmatively and stated that A/1 was the first CUIS defector from the then newly formed DDI, the CIA's Cuban counterpart for external security and counter-intelligence operations.

(3)

Mr. Piccolo stated that he did not participate in the <sup>initial</sup> handling and debriefing of A/1 but became involved in the case during the summer of 1964 when he first met A/1. At that time, Mr. Piccolo was assigned to "handle" A/1, i.e., to ensure that A/1 was properly accommodated <sup>respected</sup> and to provide companionship ~~for~~ for A/1. <sup>over</sup> later

Mr. Piccolo ~~became~~ became responsible for debriefing A/1. Mr. Piccolo was not able to recall the exact time period during which he debriefed A/1 but believed he debriefed A/1 for approximately a four to six month period. Mr. Piccolo stated that [Harold Swenson] Barney Hedelgo and Dan Flores also debriefed A/1. ~~Harold Swenson~~ ~~Barney Hedelgo~~

Mr. Piccolo was given as to the responsibilities of WH/SAS/4, the CIA component responsible for the A/1 case. He indicated that this component <sup>was</sup> worked <sup>with</sup> <sup>Harold Swenson</sup> against the Cuban Intelligence Services. He further indicated that

MC  
DIX

We indicated that he could contact  
us/A/1 prior to 1966 and the last in-  
formation he had was that A/1 was in  
Miami, Florida and adjusting  
in well to life in the United States.

Mr. Piccolo recalled that A/1 had  
been debriefed <sup>in Canada</sup> after his defection.  
He stated that the objectives  
of the initial debriefings would  
have been to gain biographic  
data on persons associated  
with the Cuban intelligence  
service and information on  
persons who might collaborate  
with the CIA. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ As for the filing  
of the debriefing reports, Mr.  
Piccolo said the filing procedure  
would have been dictated by  
the manner in which the  
case was handled i.e. by  
subject or cryptonym or person-  
ality. He did state that  
debriefing reports would have  
initially been held in the office  
handling the case. These reports  
would have been "held tight" to  
allow time for operations to be developed  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ intelligence  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ while security risks  
are at a minimum. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ When  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ where such reports would  
now be located Mr. Piccolo  
said he did not know.

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Mr. Piccolo indicated that

WH/SAS/C1 To carry out its functions may have run double agent operations

Mr. Piccolo was next queried whether he recalled a CIA Component referred to as the "domestic exploitation section". Mr. Piccolo stated that this terminology was not familiar to him but that domestic exploitation would most likely have been located in a positive intelligence section of the Agency such as the Domestic Contacts Division. <sup>However</sup> He ~~did~~ did state that recruitment of a contact in the country for ~~utilization~~ utilization in foreign operations would have been

the responsibility of every operations officer. He ~~did~~ doubted that the Western Hemisphere Division would have run such an office but that operational recruitment would have been handled as part of a specific project or program.

Mr. Piccolo was queried whether A/1 provided any information to the CIA or the



Harvey Oswald and his possible contact with the DGB. He responded that he recalls no A/I debriefing reports providing such information nor did A/I provide such information to him ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Mr.

Hedalgo further declared that Moore [Swenson] Hedalgo, and Flores never indicated to him that A/I had ever provided any information on Lee Harvey Oswald.

Mr. Piccolo was next queried as to the meaning of the term "Special Intelligence". He indicated that the term usually applies to the interception of communication e.g. signal intelligence which would include radio waves and radar but would not include electronic surveillance. Mr. Piccolo stated that ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ special intelligence would have been handled by "Dwain D", a special unit segregated from other agency components.

MC  
DVI

Mr. Piccolo was next asked if he had ever seen any photographs of Lee Harvey Oswald resulting from the photographic surveillance operation conducted by the CIA Mexico City station. He responded in the affirmative stating that he saw 2 photographs of LHO either entering or leaving the Cuban Embassy/Consulate in Mexico City. The first photograph was a 35mm full shot of LHO exposing his left profile as LHO looked downward. The second photograph which Mr. Piccolo recollected seeing was a back of the head view of LHO.

At the point in the interview Mr. Piccolo was shown WCF 237, the famous photo of the Mexico City Mystery Men. All printed identification ~~bordering~~ <sup>bordering</sup> the photographs were covered prior to Mr. Piccolo's examination. Mr. Piccolo was then asked who the men in WCF 237 was. Mr. Piccolo responded that he did not know but that the

person was not Lee Harvey Oswald. Mr. Piccolo was next shown a ~~full frontal~~ head photograph of LHO. This photograph also had all printed material ~~blacked out~~, disordering its surface covered. When asked ~~who~~ who the person in the photograph was, after a moment's pause, Mr. Piccolo <sup>correctly</sup> identified ~~the~~ Lee Harvey Oswald as the person in the photograph.

~~Mr. Piccolo~~ Mr. Piccolo explained the circumstances ~~under which~~ under which he viewed the above-referenced photographs. He recalled that the photos were from the Mexico City Station surveillance operation but could not recall if he saw the photographs at Hqs or in Mexico City. He indicated that he had previously heard "through the grapevine" that such photographs had been found. He further stated that approximately 2-4 weeks prior to the date of this interview Mr.



[Dan Niesciun]<sup>03</sup> had told Mr. Piccolo that Charlotte Busto<sup>03</sup> had found <sup>"the girl at the Mexico desk"</sup> the above-<sup>referring</sup> photograph of LHO. Mr. Piccolo assumed that [Mr.<sup>03</sup> Niesciun] had ~~mentioned~~ <sup>become aware</sup> of Mo. Busto's discovery through [Mr.<sup>03</sup> Niesciun] research into the Oswald case.

Finally Mr. Piccolo speculated that any photos <sup>of American males</sup> from Mexico City surveillance operation would have been sent to headquarters & that he presumed someone would have found the LHO photograph at headquarters.

Mr. Piccolo was next asked <sup>whether he is acquainted with</sup> ~~the following~~ the following people (response indicated)

- 1) George Wittne - no
- 2) Douglas Supton no
- 3) David Phillips yes
- 4) E. Howard Hunt yes, but not well
- 5) Maurice Bishop no
- 6) Fred Crozer no
- 7) Antonio Veciana no
- 8) [Stanley<sup>03</sup> Watson] yes, Deputy Chief of my cy station
- 9) Claire Bonnotra yes, in my cy
- 10) Silvia Duran ~~no recollection~~ yes, Embassy from Dept. of State

- 11) Manuel Calvillo - no
- 12) Anne Goodpasture, yes, (over)
- 13) LIRW6/3 - yes, but can recall no more

14) Wm Scott - yes; Mr. Piccolo was queried whether Mr. Scott maintained a personal safe in Mexico City while he was Chief of Station there. Mr. Piccolo responded that restricted materials would have been kept in a safe. Mr. Piccolo ~~is~~ defined restricted materials as being very sensitive, ~~and~~ i.e. not finding its way into routine file. Mr. Piccolo stated that he does not know who would have had access to such a safe.

~~Mr. Piccolo was left~~  
~~Shawna A/I Debriefing report~~  
~~7/8/77, 1964 concerning the~~  
~~activities of DSI officers in the~~  
~~field regarding visa appli-~~  
~~cations.~~

12) knew her as Win Smith's assis-  
tant - she might have  
found the LHO photographs

(9)

Mr. Piccolo was next asked if he could identify the function of the CIA component C1/S16. He responded that it was his belief that C1/S16 dealt w/ cyphers because the designation seems to imply it was a Special Intelligence Group or a Signal Intelligence Group.

At this point in the interview Mr. Piccolo was asked to examine a 5 May 1964 CIA debriefing report of A/1 regarding A/1's knowledge of LHO's possible contacts with the DSI. Mr. Piccolo stated that he does not recall ever seeing the ~~report~~ or the information contained in it. He had no recollection of Rogelio Rodriguez, Luis Calderon, and his recollection of Manuel Vega was poor.

Mr. Piccolo was next asked to examine a 7 May 64 CIA memorandum prepared by [Harold Swenson] which elaborates on A/1's knowledge of LHO and the JFK assassination.

MC  
X1

Mr. Piccolo was interviewed A/1  
 had ~~been~~ been questioned  
 during his polygraph in 1964.  
 about his knowledge of LHO.  
 Mr. Piccolo stated he did not know  
 that he did not see the polygraph  
 results but does recall that 2 persons  
 were present during the polygraph  
 session.

Mr. Piccolo stated that he  
 had never seen this memoran-  
 dum and that it did not  
 refresh his recollection regard-  
 ing Lucia Calderon.

Mr. Piccolo was then  
 asked if he could define  
 a Black Tape 201 file. He  
 stated that ~~such~~ such a  
 file has been retired and is  
 black taped to hide either  
 an operational relationship or  
 other sensitive matter.

This file is enveloped and  
 sealed. He indicated that  
~~such~~ a name trace should  
 indicate if a file has  
 been black taped. Moreover,  
 he stated that it would be  
 a very rare occurrence for  
 an agent <sup>file</sup> to be maintained  
 on a soft file basis.

Mr. Piccolo was next  
 asked to examine C.I.A. debriefing  
 no. 65 of A/1 pertaining to  
 the duties of ~~the~~ DSI officer in  
 the field regarding visa  
 applicants. Mr. Piccolo ~~stated~~  
 did not recall ~~ever~~ reviewing  
 this report. He indicated that



The <sup>subject's</sup> report appeared accurate. He further stated the DGI used extensive consulate cover in its operations. Mr. Piccolo stated that he believed Eusebio Azcue, former Cuban Consul in Mexico City, to have been a DGI ~~officer~~ officer.

Mr. Piccolo was queried concerning his knowledge of the diagram 2R. Specifically, he was asked what significance the notation 2R ~~had~~ had when placed next to the name of DGI officers Mirabal & Vega as occurs in a 30 April 64 excerpt from CIA <sup>from</sup> deferring report of A/1. Piccolo stated that the 2R probably stood for 2RNICK, a project designed to identify <sup>the</sup> clandestine Cuban intelligence network.

Mr. Piccolo next examined a 17 July 1964, CIA contact report written by himself. Mr. Piccolo verified his authorship of the contact report and if further stated that the Cuban defector AMNIP/1 identified in the report had been a Cuban G-2 agent.

who defected in 1962 ~ 1963. Mr. Piccolo further indicated that the photographs examined by A/1 and #MNIP/1, as reported in the contact report, probably originated with the LIONION <sup>surveillance</sup> operation.

Mr. Piccolo next ~~was asked~~ asked to detail his knowledge of Teresa Proenza Proenza. He stated that she was related to the manager of Cubana Airlines in Mexico. He further declared that he had no knowledge that Proenza had ever been associated with the CIA but did admit that she had been of operational interest to the Agency. He did not know if she had been a target for recruitment by the CIA. However Mr. Piccolo declined to discuss further Mrs Proenza's relationship with the CIA unless HSCA could ~~be~~ demonstrate the relevancy of the questioning.

Lastly, Mr. Piccolo was asked to examine CIA dispatch HMNW -11935, 1 September 1963, regarding Luisa Calderon. Mr. Piccolo indicated that the

designation therein of SAS/EOB  
represents Cuban Task Force/  
External Operations Branch.  
EOB, he stated operated outside  
of Cuba. Furthermore, Mr. Piccolo  
stated that he knew the author  
of the dispatch, Dave Ronis, whom  
he stated had retired from the  
CIA.

Q Who would have handled special intelligence -

A Staff D or Division D

Q Was it FI staff

A No, it would have been a special group

HTLINGUAL would have been separate  
from Division D - it was on C staff

In Mex - Aug 65 - Jan 68

( " 57 - 60 )

✓ 60 - 65 } in HQ

was involved in B. P ops - spec'l support  
at HQ

✓ prepared names,  
asst'd operational officers

Didn't know George Wittner

" Eupton

✓ Did know Dave Phillips

" " Hunt but not well

Didn't know Maurice Bishop

" Crozer

" Meciana

Did know (Stanley<sup>03</sup> Watson) Dpty Chief,  
Stat - MEX

" " Boonstra - Dept. of State

When in Mex was assigned to Cuban  
Section of MEX Sta.

✓ He has heard that MxSta had  
photo of LHO - after assas.  
but saw copy of photo from MxSta

it is clear for sure,  
it was seen - for HQ  
doesn't

✓ photo of LHO entering or exiting  
Cuban Embassy was taken

looking downward - left profile  
this was famous LHO photo

✓ 3/4 full shot

saw 2 photos

other was back of head

✓ Says if saw photo of man 6'3"  
250 lbs, short hair - would  
know it wasn't LHO

Knew Charlotte Bustos

✓ He heard before ITSCA publicity  
that C.B. had found a photo

✓ ran surveillance ops in Mex City  
helped the agent who ran the  
operation -  
was called LIONION

[Dan<sup>03</sup> ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Niesciur<sup>03</sup>]

✓ said Charlotte Bustos had found a  
photo

assumed [Dan<sup>03</sup>] found it through  
his research into the case

✓ Doesn't recall S. Duran

✓ ~~has~~ has heard Lirio/3 but  
can't recall ~~anything~~ anything



✓ doesn't recall Manuel Calvillo

Dan asks again about LHO photo

do says picture he saw quite a few years

ago - was LHO going into Cuban

Embassy - wasn't Soviet

Embassy

"The gal at Mexi desk found it"

Knew Ann Goodpasture - not positive

✓ but she might have found LHO

photo - knew her as Win Scott asst -

no specific CI duties

but worked in this  
area

Win Scott had a safe where

↓ stored materials

✓ best COS encountered in Agency

would have kept restricted materials

in the safe - very sensitive

stuff that

wouldn't find

its way into

sensitive

files

✓ doesn't know

who had access to safe

for 2

days

visa

way would be

paved

but should

look at it in

perspective

of the times

Walking at Sov. Emb. would have

trouble getting quick visa if

not know or id'd as CIA emp -

## would need proof of who you

are - if had valuable intelligence

material would be different,

never heard of Molla Bay mining Co.

for expediting  
visa  
to S. U

member of CP

agent

person of interest to S. U

" " to Block country

